

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Terry Van Steenbergen

Type: Interview

Date: March 30, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared By: Lisa Sullivan

Team: 8

Participants (non-Commission): David Wiegand

Participants (Commission): John Farmer, Lisa Sullivan, John Azzarello, and Dana Hyde

Location: FAA HDQTs

Steenbergen came to FAA in 1997. His background is ATC. He spent 20 years in the Army. His function at FAA is Presidential Movements. He does P-56 waiver processing, which is the area around Washington.

Presidential movement prior to 9-11

The Secret Service passes over the information as to where the President or the VP is going to be traveling. Steenbergen calculates distance to the hotel, the latitude and longitude notice to airmen, and he coordinates with all the effected facilities. He ensures that supervisors are in position along the route of flight. That procedure hasn't changed that much since 9-11, except that the range of has extended.

His point of coordination at the White House is Air lift Operations. He coordinates with them on the itinerary. The airplane is tracked on the TSD in the building (it is located at in his office at FAA Headquarters). It is the same equipment that Herndon uses.

On 9-11

Someone walked into the office and said an airplane had hit the World Trade Center. One floor down, on the 6th floor, they had CNN on the TV. He went down and saw the second plane hit. **All his information was coming from Nelson Garabido of the Secret Service who was calling him from the White House JOC. Nelson fed information to him. This was Steenbergen's only outside source. He doesn't know how Nelson got his information. This was was received within 30 seconds of the 2nd plane hitting the Trade Center. Garabido said, "what should we do?" Steenbergen said "We need to turn all the planes away from Washington."** He concurred. The three people in his office called

Dulles, National and BWI to tell the pilots to turn the aircraft out of the Class B airspace. It encompasses all three airports and Andrews AFB – it looks like an up-side down wedding cake.

Once we started the planes moving outbound – after 2nd plane hit the World Trade Center all inbound planes were considered hostile. Steenbergen said we needed fighters airborne. He had the three people in his office call over to Andrews, Langley, etc to see if they would launch some fighter pilots.

Dianne Creen, Karen Pontius, and Scott Hagen were in his office that day.

Because Karen had worked at Andrews AFB, she made the call over there. Scott Hagen called his liaison at Langley AFB. Obviously, they would not launch on FAA's command alone, so they tried to use the best contacts they could to make it happen. He had a line to Nelson for about the next 14 hours from the attack onward. It was a direct line; not a conference call.

He was aware that his staff had achieved what they were asked to do. He remembers he was confident that Langley was going to launch. This occurred before the plane crashed into the Pentagon.

National Command Authority needed to give access to shoot down an aircraft. He told Nelson that he needed to get that, if fighters were going to launch to fire.

Karen Pontius and Diane Creen left the building when it was evacuated. He and Scott stayed behind. Scott went into the TSD room while Steenbergen stayed on the line with Garbido. Scott said he had AAL 77 spotted on the TSD. According to Steenbergen, "Scott watched it come around the Potomac out the window." He was yelling out to Van Steenbergen were the thing was. The location was rough because of the delay in the feed.

Two minutes after Steenbergen suggested Garabido seek authorization to shoot, he responded that the Vice President had authorized the use of lethal force. Steenbergen did not do anything with this information.

He, at no point, was in communication with the 10th floor.

Mike Cirillo came down to his office looking for information about SCATANA. There was not point to turn off navigational aides; the procedure was irrelevant.

After the Pentagon, later on in the day, Nelson indicated there were additional reports of hijackings. Steenbergen's advice was to send the inbound flights from Europe back or to land them in a military airfield. That conversation took place nearer to noon.

The timeline is so unclear. Garabido told him it was a potential hijack and he passed that information along to Hagen. He does not know if the other plane that crashed in Pennsylvania was on the display used by Scott.

Commission staff asked him if there were any other reports that stuck out in his mind?
No.

He did not speak with anyone in the military that day. He does not know if Hagen talked to anyone from the military.

Once they had the airspace secure, there were reports of the hijacks off in Europe and also later in Asia. Those types of conversations went on all day.

After the second plane hit the WTC at some point they started to evacuate the building – Diane and Karen decided to leave

Involved in discussions about AF1 that morning? No. he didn't need to know where he was – did not hear anything about a threat to air force one that day.

Post event, he and Nelson Garabido tried to develop the log but it never happened.